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Stamps & Monograms
Having the letter A on the

have measuring to send you - but, alas,
I have a number of other things -
to send you will be a considerable
in the future!

Sketch
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141. ROGERS, Bruce. PERSEPHONE. By John Drinkwater. NY: Rudge, 1926. Tall 8vo, (16) pages. Large Grecian medallion, initials, & ornaments printed in gold by the Virikotype process (later used in Rogers' *Odyssey*). Black cloth. Minor edge wear, slight internal separation, near fine. 1/550, in Centaur & Arrighi types. \$85

Henry W. W. W.

from

James W. W.

 PERSEPHONE 

 BY 

JOHN DRINKWATER



PERSEPHONE was the daughter of Jupiter and Ceres, the goddess of corn. While gathering flowers in the plains of Enna, she was ravished away by Pluto to his kingdom, Hell, where she became his queen. On Ceres' complaining to Jupiter, the god promised that Persephone should be restored if it could be shown that she had tasted none of the fruits of Hell. In this she failed, having eaten a pomegranate, whereupon Jupiter ordained that she should remain for six months of each year in the shades with Pluto, returning to earth for the other six.



A ll seasons were alike to Pluto. Hell,
Not comfortless, nor only torment (far
From torment only since the impetuous day
When he had borne her down, Persephone,
From Enna's plains, his mistress and his queen)
Yet knew not change. In Hell no day and night,
Nor leaves to come and go, nor from the sun
Cool green of shades, lightened his caverned reign
Of easy gloom where, without any tides,
Voluptuous monotony was all.

II

Persephone, the bright Sicilian girl,
 Lovely that even in Paphos envy burnt—
 Of Ceres born and Jove, immortal now
 In Pluto's kingdom, was not as of old
 In that far seeming-fatal hour of loss.
 Forgotten now that noon of Enna's rape,
 The arms of Hell no longer terrified
 The zone that once reluctant they had bound
 In violation, and unwooded possessed.
 Once the divided year as Jove ordained
 Made earth not wholly lost, she learnt a mood
 Not of forgiveness merely in her times
 Of Pluto's wedlock. Slowly as she watched
 His gentler hours of lordship over Hell,
 And how his appointed regency was kept
 Not tyrannously among his patient people,
 She gently loved his gentleness, and felt
 Almost-remorse for the fury of reproach,
 With which her ravished girlhood that first day
 Had shone in Hell upon his sated lust.
 Now into their ageless lives had friendship come,
 Counsel, and gossip of the gods, and she

Went fragrantly among the mourning ghosts,
Who liked their lord the better for her grace,
With good thoughts blessing him that he should bring
A hope so lovely to so dark a world.
Nor was her kindness only this. She drew
Greatly at last into his god's embrace,
And knew her beauty not unfitly spent
Upon his joy, nor undelightedly.

III

The god, adept in Olympian amours, found
His quarry here not docile as was wont
To the accustomed ritual of pursuit,
Submission, and the indolence of neglect.
Enjoyed, her beauty, quick and desirable
As any in the strumpet-lists of Jove,
Was yet untold. After the burning hour
Ever this girl of Enna had from earth
Enchantment that perplexed and held him still.
Not now was appetite served and put by,
And, beauty used, a paramour dismissed,

As with the simple gods, who in their loves
No spectral memories knew nor anxious hope.
Neither remorse nor listening upon time,
Eternal moments being all their care.
His pupil she in immortality,
Still young in godhood, and his debtor so,
Learning from him the moods that know not time,
And ways exempt from fear and fortitude
Of age and death, yet here immortal went
In Pluto's apprehension something vexed
By mortal still. That empery complete
Of Hell, its confines perfect from the world
Beyond, that lucid unmysterious dusk,
That still unwearied and unvigorous clime,
Where secret was not, yet knowledge was not delight,
And neither body nor mind a shadow cast,—
In Pluto's Hell she kept, his ravished queen,
His equal in immortal nature now,
Things not immortal: ardours and desires,
Slow-stealing thoughts, senses alert as for
Falling of whispers not from lips of Hell.
Loving and loved, always, he knew, unknown
To him was this earth-rapt Persephone,

And grieved. Sometimes upon her brooding came
His silent step, and he would pause, and learn
From her expectant, far adventuring eyes
That saw him not, the first clouding of fear
Had ever closed upon his god's content.
Not knowing time, or how its records passed,
Yet as he watched her, sharp upon his mind
Would strike the fearful presage of a call
Summoning now, or now, and she must go—
Must go, with time again a dateless loss
Till, since Jove's contract said it, she should come
To heal again the sorrow she had made.

IV

U pon his coming now she turned, and bright
With news, with happy news, his lamentation,
Her face was love, was pity, was the doom,
The doom that must for ever wait, he knew,
Upon her presence through eternity.
Her tenderness he took, greedily held
His being to its flowing bounty, while

He knew her also tenderly resolute,
Her will as one with the supreme decree,
Inevitably fixed. 'Persephone!'
He cried, and flaming drew her to his lips,
'Not now, not now—a little yet, a little—
The season falsely calls—what messenger
Has crept upon my Hell now to betray
Our love, our kingdom—' Shaken in wrath he turned
Upon the watchers at Hell-gates—'What sloth
Slackens you, demons of my guard? What foot
Of stealth has tricked you, knaves of my promotion,
My absolute faith? Persephone your queen
Is here beguiled—come forth and bear your torment—
Transgressor—you, or you—' Upon his arm
One hand in admonition stayed, and one
Was lifted with a finger to her lips,
And gently on his anger came her word—
'No blame is theirs. There was no messenger,
No foot of stealth. The season has not lied.
I shall return. Lover, I will return—
But now the earth is stirring, and I know—
I need no messenger. The shaken mould
Is my initiation.' And she sang—

V

THEY call me now to the Athenian plains,
 Green buds from Salamis to Marathon,
 Time tells the barren branches that the pains
 Of frost are gone,
 And all the Spring now waits a word from me,
 Persephone.

Along the Danube and the Volga now
 Forests of blossom tremble to release,
 Upon my touch, knowing that Enna's vow
 Shall bring them peace,
 Fulfilment, laughter, under my caress,
 Their prophetess.

Ceres, my mother, waits. In the dark days
 She has been tending all the buried roots,
 Hearing afar the wagons, and the praise
 Of loaded fruits,
 And in my blessing only may they be,
 Persephone.

Now Pan is keeping with his burdened ewes,
 Telling them that I come for their content ;

*And through a million sheepfolds now the news
Singing is sent
How all his shepherd's promise, word by word,
In Hell is heard.*

*The lilies and the primroses are ready,
Violets and hyacinths and daffodils,
Snowdrops and crocuses, to greet their lady,
In valleys, on the hills,
By rivers, in the woods, along the sea,
Persephone.*

*On many a marble crowned acropolis,
The citizens are come to festival;
I hear them cry — 'Where is the bride of Dis,
Now winter's fall
Leaves every altar waiting on her Spring
For garlanding?'*

*By reeded pools, along the water meadows,
Under the warmer eaves, in dusky brakes,
The sun has soothed away the winter shadows,
And wings and wakes
The pretty birds to song on every tree —
'Persephone!'*

*'Persephone ! Persephone ! Persephone !'
The budding year makes music of my name ;
I am the word, the touch, the melody,
The sign and flame,
Of earth's expectancy, her spirit and dress
Of loveliness.*

*So for a little, lover and lord, farewell—
About Hell's gate the swallows are in flight,
And I must go. But earth again will tell
Her winter night,
And homing to your kisses you shall see
Persephone.*


VI

A flood of light out of the upper world,
Blinding the ghosts, silvered the fruits of Hell.
On Pluto's face, pale in the unwonted gleam,
She looked a moment, and a moment drew
It down to hers, and turning, while the gates
Swung slowly back on the familiar gloom,
She passed again into the fields of spring.



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